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ART. XII. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *The Law of Contracts*. By THEOPHILUS PARSONS, LL. D., Dane Professor of Law in Harvard University at Cambridge. Fourth Edition. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1860. 2 vols. Royal 8vo. pp. clvii. and 722, xx. and 911.

THE first edition of this work, published in 1853, was the largest and most comprehensive treatise on the subject which had been given to the world. Yet, formidable as was its bulk, this, without a close examination of the text, would give an inadequate idea of the amount of learning represented by its pages. "For finding room in the text for all I wished to say in it," the author remarks, "I have relied mainly on a peculiarity in its plan, that is, on the rigorous exclusion from the text of all cases. I have endeavored to state in the text the principles and rules of the law, as accurately, as compactly, and as logically as I could; and in the notes, and there only, I have given my authorities. Such was my rule, and the exceptions to it are few."

In seven years three large editions of the work have been exhausted, and we are now presented with the fourth. The third edition contained two new chapters. The fourth has two more chapters, many new sections, and new paragraphs in almost every chapter; and more than two thousand new cases are cited. The Indexes of both volumes have been enlarged, and put together as one Index (occupying no less than one hundred and seventy pages) at the close of the second volume; and the cases cited in either volume or both volumes have been arranged in one list, and prefixed to the first volume. These are great improvements. The whole treatise has been, indeed, rewritten, and the author has endeavored to give us "a full and accurate presentment of the law as it is at this moment, in all things which relate to the foundation, the construction, or the execution of contracts, of every kind."

To add a word of commendation to the testimony of the distinguished members of the bench and bar who have staked their reputation as legal critics on the character of this work, may be pleasant to us, if unnecessary to our subject. No lawyer can intelligently content himself with the appearance of his book-shelves if they lack either of the *four* great works of the eminent Dane Professor, — *The Law of Contracts*, *The Elements of Mercantile Law*, *The Laws of Business for Business Men*, and *the Treatise on Maritime Law*.